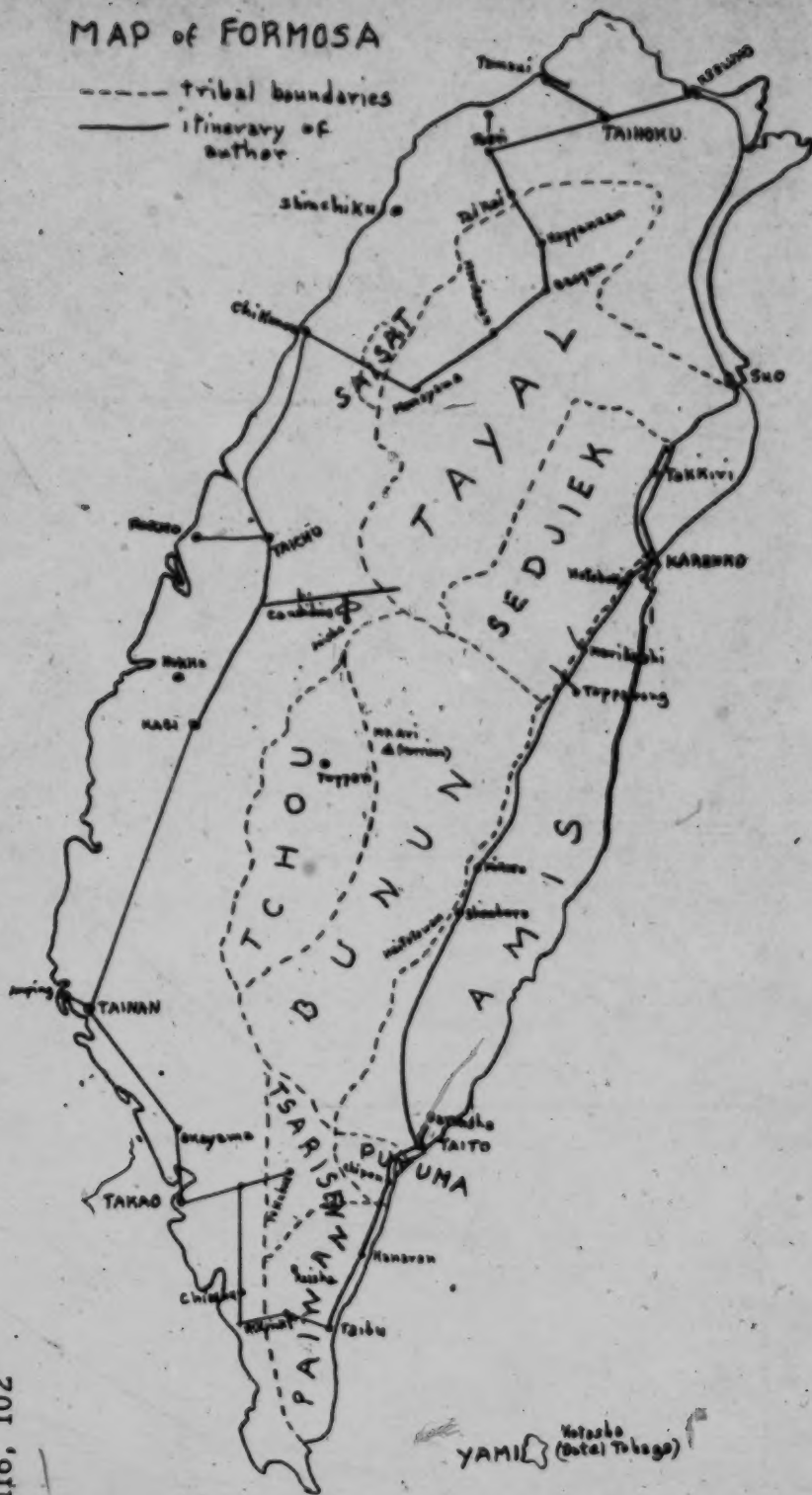


----- tribal boundaries
 ————— itinerary of
 author.



Taihoku is the capital, and it is located about 25 kilometers from the harbor of Keelung. Taihoku is a modern city and a very clean one; it reminds you of the tropics, for it has palm trees and houses with arcades which are intended to protect the passers by from the burning rays of the sun. The Japanese sections are in the center of the city around the Government buildings and the Ethnographic Museum. The latter raises its imposing structure in the midst of a lovely park.

The Chinese quarters Daitodai and Manka [MC: of Taihoku, the capital] are not nearly so neat, but they are very picturesque. As you visit them you can observe the life of the corporations, have fun deciphering the pompous meaning of the characters which compose the signs in front of the shops, and marvel at the things which a Chinese stomach [27] is capable of digesting. The street is full of people, the shops do a thriving business, and the temples are darkened by the fumes of the little sticks of incense, which burn on the altars of the gods.

11: Haguenuer--27 T-3
116, 787

(no date) 1929

Formosans

A Formosan woman scarcely ever passes the altars of the gods without stopping to ask for advice; she tosses two little crescent-shaped pieces of wood in the air, lets them fall and reads the horoscope. Then she prays, throws the pieces of wood and burns incense or "money for the gods" until the fates tell her something pleasant. All this is done to the accompaniment of the little firecrackers, which are the favorite form of popular amusement in Formosa, as they are in China.

ll: Haguenaue--27 [2] T-3
116, 545

(no date) 1929

Formosans

If you leave the large arteries, [MC: of Taihoku] you hear the din of the restaurants and small theatres, and occasionally, in a side street, the monotonous chant of a singer who is accompanying herself on the p'i-pa.

The land around Taihoku is fertile. Our first excursion took us to Tamsui, and the landscape is so pretty that it is a trip well worth taking. Although the little city has declined in importance, it has an historic interest, for it was there that the Spaniards erected the Fort of the Holy Trinity in 1629, but the Dutch wrested it from them in 1641. They reconstructed the little fortress, making the walls eight feet thick and so strong that they withstood the shells which were fired by the battleships of Admiral Courbet in 1884. The "fort" contains the English consular offices today, and its roof is used as an observation platform for tourists. On the way back you visit the thermal spring of Hokuto, which is a kind of little Enghien for officials.

11: Haguenauer--27 [4] T-3 (no date) 1929
116, 484

Formosans

The railroad running south to Takao from Tansui passes through Itabashi. Tourists usually stop at this station to go visit the Chinese garden of Li Pen-yuan.

11: Haguenaer--28-29

T-3

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines

116, 174, 177, 563

The center of Formosa is occupied by a broad chain of mountains. At the beginning the populations who reside here may have lived in the plain, but successive waves of invaders have driven them back gradually to the high plateaus. Today the aborigines, who refuse to have any contact with civilization, are the only inhabitants of the mountains. The others, who have abandoned their ancestral customs and language to adopt those of Formosa, are completely submerged among the Chinese; they are called "jukuban", [29] meaning those who have ripened by contact with civilization, and this distinguishes them from the real savages, the seiban, who are raw or green.

11: Haguenaue--29 T-3
116, 101, 161, 657

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines

The seiban [MC: completely unacculturated natives] are divided into eight large tribes: the Tayal, Saisat, Tchou, Bunun, Paiwan, Puyuma, Amis and the Yami. The total population is only 134,000, and that is very small for such a large territory.*

* The map [MC: see category 102 page: facing 25] shows the location of these eight tribes. The Tayal are divided into the Tayal and the Sedjiek. The Tsarisen speak a language which is similar to that of the Paiwan.

The tribes that I have just named are distinguished by somatological characteristics, language, social organization and customs. They have nothing in common except the system of administration, to which they were subjected by the Japanese.

11: Haguenuer--29 [2]T-3

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines

116, 628, 657, 728

The pacification [MC: of the tribes living in the mountains] came to an end in 1915, for most of the villages had surrendered at that time. Since then the savage zone has been tranquil, and head hunting will soon be just a memory. The electric current no longer runs through the wire barrier which was set up to keep the aborigines from entering civilized territory. And you can cross the island in two places at least. However, it is wise not to go too far from the lookouts elsewhere, for there are still quarrels between some of the tribes at rather frequent intervals.

11: Haguenuer--29 -30
116, 486, 625

T-3

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines

How do you travel in the savage territory? You have to have a safe-conduct, which is supplied by the Chief of Police who is in charge of the savages. With this passport you can travel under escort along the trails which skirt [30] the "savage zone". You go from post to post. These are generally placed four or five kilometers apart, and they are guarded by Japanese policemen, assisted by natives, who can speak enough Japanese so that they can act as interpreters. Larger posts are placed at strategic spots. And there you find a large exchange post, a school and workshops.

11: Haguenauer--30 T-3
116, 437, 625

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines

The policeman of the savage zone has an entirely different task than his colleagues of the metropolis; he is essentially a director of public works, a professor of agriculture, a teacher and a councillor. The policeman even engages in commerce, but it is of a very special kind, for he does not deal in money; there is a fixed rate for bartered products, and according to that he takes the savage goods and exchanges them for sabre blades, knives, pieces of glass, sauce pans, thread, matches, and alcohol.

11: Haguenauer--30-31

T-3

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines

116, 871, 887, 177.65

Japanese

636.65

In spite of what other people may have said, the Japanese are treating the savages in a very kind fashion today. The civilizing work is proceeding methodically and patiently. Most of the savages who are over fifteen have not as yet understood the usefulness of the teaching, however, and only the little ones are beginning to become Japanese. The elders get bored, live an idle existence, and die of illness or alcohol. Their only delight is to borrow a gun from the police station occasionally, and to shoot three or four bullets at the wild boars or the deer. The bow and arrow are enough to kill birds. However, there are fortunately some exceptions, and the teachers have obtained some very brilliant results. I talked Japanese to some savages who had become thoroughly Japanese; they had diplomas from a normal school, and were working as assistants to directors of the posts or teachers. I repeat that the [31] Japanese are treating the natives in a very humanitarian manner. And this should be more successful than in other places, for here in these poor regions there is nothing to attract the large commercial companies which are all too often the curse of colonies. The gentleness of the system may succeed in saving a part of the native population, possibly the Amis. The savages who will not be able to adapt themselves will probably disappear in the near future.

The best way of entering the Tayal territory is to take the railroad as far as Toen, and from there a country bus carries you to Taikei. The "car" is rather rickety, and it is full of chattering Formosan women. They put their hands up to protect their chignons, which are adorned with prized gold hairpins. Everyone is squeezed and tossed around. After an hour's ride we reached Taikei which is a little city set in a picturesque fashion on a hillside beside a broad torrent. You have to take a lorry to go on to Kappanzan. [AN: Kakupanzan] This vehicle consists of a rattan chair, which is perched on a heavy mobile car, that runs along a narrow railroad track. The trip lasts for four hours, and yet the two Chinese who push it scarcely ever stop to rest. At first the track rises as it skirts the western slope of the mountain. Then you reach a pass which is at an altitude of about 800 meters, and from it you can see the whole valley. We stop to rest for a time, and then start down the eastern slope.... The almost naked coolies [32] give a good push to the car and then jump up on it. It goes careening down the side, making a noise like that of an express train, and this is very surprising for such a small vehicle. ... There are dangers, for the track has sudden curves, in places it crosses suspended bridges, and I seriously doubt whether the primitive brake would keep you from turning over in case the car left the tracks.

Finally we reach Kappanzan, [AN: Kakupanzan] which is the first large lookout post in the region. ...

11: Haguenaue--32 T-3

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines

116, 177

The aborigines at Kappanzan[AN: Kakupanzan] have been under the influence of civilization for a long time....

11: Haguenaer--32 [2] T-3
116, 484

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines

We continue our trip to Gaogan, which is another large post that is twenty-five kilometers further on; and these twenty-five kilometers have to be covered on foot. A "savage" balances our light baggage on the two ends of a bamboo, places it on his shoulders, and takes the lead. We follow on foot, accompanied by an armed guard who is to take us to the neighboring post. The landscape becomes wilder as the trail ascends the mountain flank. And looking down at our feet we glimpse the torrent which we have been following ever since we left Taikei. It flows at the bottom of a narrow and winding gorge; there is little water at this season, and it is just a narrow green ribbon, which slips between the masses of rock. After five long hours we reach Gaogan. The post dominates the torrent which makes a broad curve at this point. The village, consisting of several huts, is on the mountain slope.

1: Haguenuer--32 [3] T-3
116, 721

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines
Atayal

The Tayal are considered the most warlike people of the island.

11: Haguenaue --32-33 T-3
116, 301

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines
Atayal

The Tayal are not nearly so fond of adornment as their [33] neighbors in the south.

11: Haguenaue--33
116, 142

T-3

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines
Atayal

The Tayal are well-built, and quite slender. The eyes have nothing Mongolian about them, while the brown skin reminds you of that of the Malays. Physical beauty is rare, but some of the women are attractive.

11: Haguenauer--33 [2] T-3
116, 192, 194, 576

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines
Atayal

The relations between the Tayal are not governed by a ceremonious code of etiquette. When one Tayal meets another, he does not bother about making any complicated salutations. The Tayal language does not have any polite expressions, or any honorific prefixes, and the intimate form of address is the only one known. "Musa su ino pe" (Where are you going?) replaces our Good Day. The pronunciation is energetic and harsh: ao (yes), yats (no), skuriek (man), reliax (mountain), bauniaux (arrow), alakè (child), kesia (water), etc.

11: Haguénauer--33 [3] T-3
116, 342, 352

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines
Atayal

The Tayal house is built of wood, and bamboo is used whenever possible; its roof is shaped like ours. The interior has just one rectangular room, and every corner contains a wattling bed with a cover.

11: Haguenaue--33 [4]
116, 591

T-3

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines
A tayal

The occupants of a Tayal house are not very numerous; they consist of just one family, according to our meaning of the term. Occasionally the parents live with a married couple, but that is not an obligatory rule. And you do not find several related couples living together, as is the case among the Tchou.

11: Haguénauer--33-34
116, 462, 562

T-3

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines
Atayal

The Tayal woman works very hard. It is her task to go get the wood and the water, to cultivate the millet and sweet potatoes for the household; and it is also she who weaves the clothing. The husband fishes or goes hunting. He takes part in war expeditions and helps guard the village. However, the woman is not a slave, [34] and she is her husband's equal.

11: Haguenaue--34 T-3
116, 595, 837

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines
Atayal

Polygamy among the Tayal is forbidden, and the husband must be faithful to his wife, and protect her.

11: Haguenaue--34 [2] T-3
116, 583, 584

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines
Atayal

A Tayal marriage is arranged in this way: the girl is demanded by the man's family through an intermediary, who is usually the village chief. If she accepts, the man's family sends the girl's family some gifts, which are intended to serve as compensation to the parents for losing one member of the household. The father of the bride-to-be is anxious that these should be as valuable and as numerous as possible.

11: Haguenaue--34 [3]
116, 585

T-3

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines
Atayal

After the gifts [MC: by way of bride price] have been delivered, there is a festival in the house of the future husband. And during this feast the two families exchange a solemn marriage promise. The fiancé offers wine to all the close relatives of his wife, and the men of the two families form a real alliance. The girl's parents spend two or three days in the fiancé's house and then go home to make ready for the departure of their daughter. In certain clans the marriage vow involves an exchange of very significant gifts: the two families exchange implements of husbandry, food and tools for weaving.

11: Haguenaue--34 [4]
116, 585

T-3

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines
Atayal

The Tayal husband goes to get his wife on the appointed day, and brings her back to the house which he has built. Several days after the marriage, the couple pays a visit to the wife's parents, but this is not a definite leave-taking, as it is in China. Among the Tayal the wife's family keeps the right to protect her.

11: Haguenaue--34-35
116, 586, 627, 837

T-3

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines
Atayal

If a Tayal wife is mistreated by her husband's family [35] she can go home to her parents. But this is a very serious act, for it entails not only a divorce, but a rupture between the two families. It is a case of vendetta, and the only way of avoiding a reprisal on the part of the wife's family is by paying an indemnity. Usually an unhappy wife just asks a third person to intervene, it may be the village chief, or some one else. If the husband is at fault, he is scolded. If the husband is guilty of adultery, the wife has the right to leave the house, and the husband cannot ask her family to return the sum that he paid in order to marry her. If the wife is guilty, her spouse has the right to repudiate her and to ask for the restoration of this sum. When the divorce proceedings are over, each family must kill a pig and distribute the pieces among the other families in the village. A Tayal woman who has been repudiated never goes back to her family; she has to marry again or live alone.

11: Haguenuer--35 T-3
116, 591

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines
Atayal

There is another form of marriage among the Tayal in which the husband enters his wife's family, but this is only done in cases where the wife's family is short of men.

11: Haguenaue--35 [2] T-3
116, 845

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines
Atayal

The Tayal are loyal to each other, and they are also good parents; however, they kill all twins for they believe that they bring bad luck.

11: Haguenauer--35 [3] T-3
116, 553, 844, 854

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines
Atayal

The new-born Tayal baby is bathed at once by an elderly women, his grandmother if possible. Then he is named two weeks after birth. The Tayal baby stays with his mother until he can walk. Until that time she carries him wherever she goes, and he rides astride on her hip, with his mouth at the level of her breast.

11: Haguenaue--35 [4] T-3
116, 855

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines
Atayal

When the Tayal child is about five years old, he begins to wander around the house, but he is still practically naked.

11: Haguenuer--36
116, 304, 857, 864

T-3

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines
Atayal

When a Tayal child is five, his forehead is tattooed with the distinctive mark which is worn by all the Tayal. When a boy is seven, he begins to play with a bow. He sleeps with his parents until he is ten years old, but after that he has a place in the children's bed. Little girls never sleep beside the boys, for there is a very strict taboo which keeps brothers away from their sisters.

11: Haguenuer--36 [2] T-3
116, 883

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines
Atayal

When Tayal boys are fifteen, they follow their fathers on hunting and fishing expeditions. They learn to use the bow and arrow, to set traps, to fish with the fish-gig, to handle the cutlass and sabre and to fight. Little girls follow the women to the fields, help in the housework and learn to weave.

11: Haguenaue--36 [3] T-3

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines

116, 286, 304, 554, 581

Atayal

The Tayal woman prides herself on her knowledge of weaving, for it is only when she is a past mistress in the art that she can be tattooed on her cheeks and around her lips with the marks which will attract the young men to her.

11: Haguenuer--36 [4]
116, 286, 301, 554. 721

T-3

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines
Atayal

Custom decrees that a girl should wear a number of bracelets of brass wire which corresponds to the designs that she can weave. If a man wears these bracelets, they have a totally different meaning; if he has them on just one arm, they are simply ornaments, while if he wears them on both, it shows that he has taken part in a head hunting expedition.

11: Haguenuer--36 [5]
116, 304, 554

T-3

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines
Atayal

By looking at the face of the person to whom you are talking, you can learn much about his rank as a warrior; for the lucky hero has some additional tattooing under his lower lip.

A Tayal never went out alone in quest of a head; he was always accompanied. The little group did not start until it had consulted the omens; if one of the members of the expedition had had a bad dream, or if the augural bird, the silliok, had sung in the wrong way, the warriors did not leave the village. And even if all the signs were favorable, they did not venture very far. They built a little hut at the entrance to the forest, and arranged their weapons and food stuffs there. Then they purified their arms and provisions by sprinkling them with fresh water. When this was done, the head of the expedition purified himself, and then all of his companions in the same way. Then everyone went to bed. The next morning they examined the dreams and portents again, especially the bird songs. The hunt did not begin unless all of the signs were propitious. As you see, the change from ordinary life to the hunt was made progressively and in a prudent fashion. It was a matter of getting the support of the ancestors' spirits. In the village all taboos were enforced while the hunters were absent. The women did not weave, all useless activities were avoided, and the fires which were lighted in each house before the departures of the warriors were kept burning. The men walked until they found a good spot to lay a trap. The capture of a head was not an heroic combat, for the unfortunate victim was taken by surprise. One warrior shot, while the others rushed ahead to finish him off with lance thrusts. When the victim was prostrate, the warrior for whom the hunt had been arranged [38] drew his sabre and cut off the head of the dying

11: Haguenuer--37-38
116, 721, 726, 787

T-3

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines-2
Atayal

man at the base of the skull. The head was taken back in a special kind of net, or else it was fastened to a hook that was inserted into the scalp.

The return[MC: of a headhunting party] to the village was accomplished as progressively as the departure. The warriors stopped at a certain distance from the houses and signaled their arrival by shouts and gunshots; the shouts betokened the number of captured heads, and there were as many gunshots as they had taken guns. But this ritual was only observed if the expedition had been crowned with success. If it failed, the warriors avoided any kind of noise, and they did not return to the village until nightfall; when they got back, they laid their weapons and clothing at the doors of their houses for they were not supposed to cross the threshold until they had disrobed completely. This precaution was taken to keep bad luck from entering. The arms were purified with water the next day.

11: Haguenaue--38 [2] T-3
116, 727, 766

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines
Atayal

One important thing to note is that if a member of the [MC: headhunting] expedition was killed during the hunt, the head was not brought back to the village. It was abandoned with the victim's body in the forest. The reason for this was that the aborigines believed that the head had been taken against the wish of the spirits, and that consequently, it could not be offered to them.

11: Haguenaue--38-39 T-3
116, 727, 769

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines
Atayal

Gries of joy welcomed the return of the fortunate warriors. The villagers went out to greet them, and accompanied them to the house of the murderer, who was the hero of the day. The village chief and the members of the expedition made a circle around the head. They apologized to it, and offered it wine. The head was placed above a receptacle, the jaws were opened, and it was given millet wine. When this fell into the receptacle, it was passed [39] around in a circle, and all the heroes drank it. But it was not drunk in any ordinary way; the warriors took it two by two, and from the same cup, so this rite was really like a vow, in which they pledged to fight together like brothers. Meanwhile, the inhabitants were almost delirious. The women had brought millet wine and food; a large feast was held, and the spirit of the dead was invited to share in it. They begged it to drink, feast, and to invite the spirits of its relatives to the party. This banquet was followed by a dance, in which the women participated as well as the men. Everyone joined hands, and made a big circle, then the dance consisted of turning around and singing. They circled three times from left to right, then three times from right to left, etc. The festival lasted until the supply of food was exhausted.

11: Haguenuer--39
116, 281, 411, 531, 727

T-3

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines
Atayal

Meanwhile, [MC: during the ceremonies following a successful headhunting expedition] the head had been boiled, and the skin of the scalp and hair were removed. These were not discarded, for they became the property of the successful hunter, and he decorated his weapons with them.

11: Haguenaue--39-40 T-3
116, 349, 727, 769

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines
Atayal

The clean skull was placed in the midst of a collection of them which the Tayal kept on a special set of shelves that was erected a little outside each village. The new addition was covered with a little roof of leaves, and offerings of millet and millet wine were placed in front of it. The village chief and the members of the expedition gathered in front of the shelves and summoned the spirit of the victim. They asked it to descend by a "spirit ladder" which was placed at one of the ends of the shelves; it consisted of a short bamboo stem to which skeins of hemp had been fastened at various intervals to serve as rungs. When the spirit had come down, they invited it to eat and drink with them. And then they requested it to be kind to them, and to invite [40] the spirits of the members of its family to come and join it. In this way the warriors ensured the success of the next expedition.

11: Haguenaue--40 T-3
116, 554, 721, 769

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines
Atayal

So we see that the capture of a head was not an act of savagery, nor was it purely a matter of individual glorification. It is true that the successful hunter had a right to be tattooed as a warrior, or if he already had this distinction, he might give his head to a younger man so that the latter might have this signal honor. But head hunting was essentially an enterprise which was imbued with a very special kind of religious meaning. It was done with the approbation of the souls of the ancestors, and it was an affair which concerned the whole community.

11: Haguenuer--40 [2]
116, 241, 695, 721, 769

T-3

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines
Atayal

Head hunting was such a sacred practice that it could only be carried on under certain circumstances:

1. to please the spirits of the departed ancestors, and to ensure their protection;
2. to be able to enter the abode of the souls after death;
3. so that the community would have a good harvest;
4. to determine the innocence of an accused man, or to decide which one of two adversaries was right; the spirits will permit the innocent man to get a head while the guilty person will not succeed.

11: Haguenuer--40-41
116, 721, 773

T-3

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines
Atayal

The Tayal have several legends which explain the origin of this custom. [MC: of head-hunting] Although they vary, they are all fundamentally the same: it seems that two clans were created by the original ancestor, and that on one occasion one of them was numerically inferior to the other. Accordingly it demanded the right of killing as many members of the other clan as would be required in order to reestablish the [41] original parity. The head of the clan which had the numerical superiority recognized the justice of this demand.

This legend is the best possible illustration of the social importance of head hunting. The native considers that it is a sacred command, and he believes that he must conquer as many spirits as possible in order to assure numerical superiority and the prosperity of his clan.

11: Haguenaue--41 T-3
116, 774, 775

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines
Atayal

The Tayal believe that there is no complete separation between the worlds of the living and the dead. For the Formosan natives, the living man is characterized by the fact that he shelters one or several spirits in his body. But these spirits have a distinct life, and they may leave the body for a time or permanently. In the latter instance the body decays, and the individual dies. The spirit (or spirits) continues to live at liberty until it reincarnates itself.

11: Haguenuer--41-42
116, 602, 775, 842

T-3

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines
Atayal

The Tayals' ideas about birth are no more scientific than their thoughts concerning death. However surprising this may seem, they do not look upon a child as the simple result of conjugal relations, for they believe that birth can only be achieved when a soul is reincarnated in the body of a woman in the tribe. Therefore the spirits are closely associated with the existence of the living. The community and the clan are literally a group of souls some of which are imprisoned in bodies, while others are free, but all of them are serving the clan. [42] The community increases in strength in proportion to the number of the souls who are interested in its fate.

11: Haguenauer--42
116, 602, 609, 721, 775

T-3

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines
Atayal

The victim of a head hunt was always a stranger, and they cut off his head to liberate his soul. By apologizing to it and offering it wine and millet, the soul was enslaved so that it would serve the clan. And this conquered soul added one more unit to the community, which now had an additional voice in the kingdom of the spirits. This reasoning is also applied to animals. The savage collects the skulls of the beasts which he has slain; by doing this he believes that he increases his power over them, and that he ensures good hunting for the future.

11: Haguenaue--42 [2]
116, 181, 186, 577, 609

T-3

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines
Atayal

The Tayal race is a very proud one, much more so than you would suspect. It is industrious, but only in so far as the task concerns the whole community. The men are calm, but if they get angry nothing can stop them. An unbounded curiosity and feeling of suspicion with regard to all strangers are two more traits of the Tayal mentality. He has full confidence in his comrades, but as soon as he is with people of another tribe, he becomes suspicious and reserved. The Tayal have some fine virtues too; they have a highly developed sense of honor, are not greedy, do not steal and rarely tell lies.

11: Haguenaue--42-43 T-3
116, 212, 802

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines
Atayal

The Tayal are practically uncivilized. The Tayal do not have any means of writing, and when they want to do some arithmetic, they use strings of knotted straw or little sticks; [43] addition, subtraction, multiplication and division are done by means of little sticks, which are laid on the ground.

11: Haguenaue--43

T-3

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigine

116, 821, 825

Atayal

The Tayal do not know how to reckon the lunar months, and only the regular recurrence of certain natural phenomena reminds them that there are certain tasks to perform. For example, the appearance of buds and the frequent thunder storms in March show them that it is time to sow. They recognize most of the birds by their cry, but do not perceive the beauty of their songs.



11: Haguenauer--43 [2]
116, 533

T-3

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines
Atayal

The Tayal men are like us in feeling that they have to laugh and sing. They sing while they are working, and you cannot walk through the mountains without hearing the voices of women in the fields, or of little boys who are gathering reeds in the mountains. Their songs are always improvisations. I discovered that after I had made several unfortunate attempts to transcribe them. It was impossible to make one of the savages repeat the same thing. He improvises on very simple subjects, such as a hunting incident, or a dinner that he is planning to attend. There are no poetic themes.

11: Haguenuer--43-44 T-3
116, 156, 183

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines
Atayal

The savage does not reason to any great extent, although he shows initiative during a hunt or a battle. But his other actions are governed by tradition, or by the command of the village chieftain. The science of the Tayal is purely empirical, and it is limited to a few observations concerning atmospheric phenomena, the properties of certain plants and the habits of the wild animals. If the intellectual life of the Tayal is on such a low plane, it is not because they are entirely absorbed by the necessities of their vegetative life; it is rather that they do not see any need for thinking. If you ask a Tayal a question, he will give you the traditional [44] answer which he got from his ancestors. He never tries to explain anything.

11: Haguenaue--44

T-3

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines

116, 773

Atayal

[MC: an Atayal myth] In the olden days there was no night. It was always light and very hot, so the dry bushes were dying. The men did not have any time to sleep, so the ancestors had a council and decided to shoot at the sun, so that it would not be so powerful. Two young warriors set out on the expedition. They took grains of millet for food, and they placed them in bamboo tubes which served as earrings. While they were travelling, they planted orange trees and wild peach trees. After several score years full of adventures, they reached the end of the earth, where the vault of the heavens joins the flat disk upon which we dwell. One of the warriors had a sunstroke, and he died, but the other one managed to shoot an arrow right into the solar disk. Something emerged from the wound, and later it was called the moon.

11: Haguenauer--44 [2] T-3
116, 773, 787, 825

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines
Atayal

[MC: a Tayal myth] There was a very large stone on the seashore in a place called Binnox-bayan. One day the crow and the silliok met on this stone, and said: "The one who can move this stone will have the power to know what the spirits want, and he shall be their herald". The crow tried, but could not move the stone while the silliok did it without any difficulty. The men who saw this were very astonished and they praised the silliok. Then the bird said to them: " From now on, you must listen to my cry. When I cry at your right, it will be a good portent, and you will have good hunting. If I cry while I am crossing the road that you are taking, do not go on the hunt. And if I cry first at the right and then at the left, it will also be a bad omen. Do not forget what I have just told you. "

The Tayal stories explain everything, the origin of the animals and that of the various deeds of men. Here is the explanation of the hunt:

Formerly men did not need to hunt, and they simply called the animals. The latter approached, and permitted the men to cut a slice of meat off their backs. But one day a poor fool had the idea of killing an animal, and after that the beasts were suspicious, and so they refused to let men gash them. Ever since that time people have had to hunt.

The soul is lodged in a part of the body, generally in the pupil of the eye, or in the shoulder, but at death it leaves the body. The corpse is buried in the house between the beds. The spirit flies west in the direction of the abode of the souls. The road leading there is a long and dangerous one, and on the way you have to cross a broad pond. It is true that there is a bridge, the rainbow (the "bridge of souls" in Tayal), but not all of the spirits are authorized to [46] cross it. Only those of the warriors who have taken heads and of women who know how to weave nicely are admitted. The other spirits have to make a long detour. The souls of people who died a violent death or who were drowned are never admitted, and they are condemned to wander through the forests. They attack the living, and make them sick, so to get rid of them you have to have recourse to magic remedies. Other mischievous spirits fly over the surface of the swamps; they are the "souls-fire", which are rather like our will-o'-the-wisps. Anyone who sees them will die. We should observe that according to the native belief, the fact that the abode of the dead is a long way away does not prevent these souls from coming back among the living; on the contrary, the aborigines think that the spirits who are attracted by offerings return very rapidly.